

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image-forming apparatus, comprising:
  - a hardware resource configured to be used for image formation;
  - a program configured to perform processing related to the image formation;
  - a communication part;
  - a format information acquisition part configured to acquire format information from an apparatus connected to the image-forming apparatus via the communication part, the format information including information on whether a format of image data is supportable as input by the connected apparatus;
  - a format determination part configured to determine a transfer-time format for the image data, based on the format information that has been acquired, the format determination part being further configured to determine the transfer-time format based on a determination as to whether the format of the image data is inversely convertible in the connected apparatus, when the format of the image data cannot be output in the connected apparatus;
  - an image quality selection part configured to select a level of an image quality at which the image data is transferred to the connected apparatus, based upon capabilities of the connected apparatus; and
  - an image data conversion part configured to perform a format conversion of the image data in accordance with the determined transfer-time format of the image data and the level of the image quality that has been selected.

2. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

an apparatus selection part configured to select one or more apparatuses from a plurality of apparatuses connected to the image-forming apparatus via the communication part.

3. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said apparatus selection part is configured to select the one or more connected apparatuses based on an input by an operator.

4. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said apparatus selection part is configured to select the one or more connected apparatuses based on information input to the image-forming apparatus.

5. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said format information acquisition part is configured to acquire the format information by making a request to the connected apparatus for the format information.

6. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said format information acquisition part is configured to acquire said format information, which includes at least one of: information indicating, format by format, whether the format of the image data is supportable as input and is supportable as output by the connected apparatus; information on whether the format of the image data is convertible in the connected apparatus; information on a compression of a convertible format of the

image data; and information as to whether the format of the image data is convertible by hardware in the connected apparatus.

7. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said format information acquisition part is configured to store the acquired format information, which is based on a unit of the connected apparatus.

8. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said format determination part is configured to determine the format of the image data with a highest compression rate as the transfer-time format, based on the information on whether the format of the image data is supportable as input by the connected apparatus.

9. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said format information acquisition part is configured to acquire the format information from the connected apparatus at a time of activation of the image-forming apparatus.

10. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

an evaluation part configured to evaluate the connected apparatus independently based on the information on whether the format of the image data is supportable as input by the connected apparatus.

11. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein the evaluation part is configured to provide a result of the evaluation, the result being displayable to an operator.

12. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 10, further comprising:

a display configured to display a result of the evaluation by said evaluation part.

13. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

an evaluation part configured to evaluate each apparatus connected to the image-forming apparatus via the communication part independently based on the information on whether the format of the image data is supportable as input by the respective apparatus connected to the image-forming apparatus.

14. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said format determination part is configured to determine a reversible compression format as the transfer-time format, based on the information on whether the format of the image data is supportable as input by the connected apparatus.

15. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said format information acquisition part is configured to acquire the format information from the connected apparatus at a time of transferring the image data thereto.

16. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 15, wherein said format information acquisition part is configured to acquire the format information from the connected apparatus, based on an input indicating that the image data is to be transferred.

17. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 15, wherein said image quality selection part is further configured to determine whether to transfer the image data with a high image quality to the connected apparatus.

18. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein said format determination part is configured to determine a reversible compression format as the transfer-time format, based on the information on whether the format of the image data is supportable as input by the connected apparatus, when said image quality selection part determines the image data is to be transferred with the high image quality to the connected apparatus.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 15, wherein said format determination part is configured to determine whether to transfer the image data with a single format when the image data is to be transferred to a plurality of apparatuses connected to the image-forming apparatus via the communication part.

21. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 20, wherein said format determination part is configured to transfer the image data to the

connected apparatuses with the image data remaining unconverted when the image data is prevented from being transferred to the connected apparatuses with the single format.

22. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the communication part is configured to connect the image-forming apparatus to the connected apparatus through a network.

23-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) An image data transfer method of an image-forming apparatus with a hardware resource used for image formation, a program configured to perform processing related to the image formation, and a communication part, the image data transfer method comprising:

acquiring format information from an apparatus connected to the image-forming apparatus via the communication part, the format information including information on whether a format of image data is supportable as input by the connected apparatus;

determining a transfer-time format for the image data, based on the format information that has been acquired, and determining the transfer-time format based on a determination as to whether the format of the image data is inversely convertible in the connected apparatus, when the format of the image data cannot be output in the connected apparatus;

selecting a level of an image quality at which the image data is to be transferred to the connected apparatus, based upon capabilities of the connected apparatus; and

performing a format conversion of the image data in accordance with the determined transfer-time format of the image data and the level of the image quality that has been selected.

27. (Previously Presented) The image data transfer method as claimed in claim 26, wherein said acquiring acquires the format information from the connected apparatus at a time of activation of the image-forming apparatus.

28. (Previously Presented) The image data transfer method as claimed in claim 26, wherein said acquiring acquires the format information from the connected apparatus at a time of transferring the image data thereto.

29. (Previously Presented) The image data transfer method as claimed in claim 26, wherein, in the acquiring, the connected apparatus is configured to connect to the image-forming apparatus through a network.

30. (Currently Amended) A method of transferring image data between first and second image-forming apparatuses connected via a network, the method comprising:

generating format information, by the first image-forming apparatus, including information on whether a format of the image data is supportable as input by the first image-forming apparatus;

acquiring the format information, by the second image-forming apparatus, from the first image-forming apparatus via the network;

determining, by the second image-forming apparatus, a transfer-time format for the image data, based on the acquired format information, and determining the transfer-time

format based on a determination as to whether the format of the image data is inversely convertible in the ~~connected~~ first image-forming apparatus, when the format of the image data cannot be output in the ~~connected~~ first image-forming apparatus;

selecting a level of an image quality, by the second image-forming apparatus, at which the image data is to be transferred to the first image-forming apparatus, based upon capabilities of the first image-forming apparatus; and

performing a format conversion, by the second image-forming apparatus, of the image data in accordance with the determined transfer-time format of the image data and the level of the image quality that has been selected.

31. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the format determination part is configured to determine the transfer-time format, which is the format of the image data with a highest compression rate that either can be output by the connected apparatus or is convertible by the connected apparatus.

32. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the format determination part is configured to determine the transfer-time format, which is the format of the image data with a highest compression rate that either can be output by the connected apparatus or is both convertible and printable by the connected apparatus.

33. (Previously Presented) The image-forming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the image data conversion part is configured to perform the format conversion of the image data in accordance with the determined transfer-time format of the image data and the



level of the image quality that has been selected, the determined transfer-time format of the image data having a highest compression rate.